

The recent changes to address educational issues within our state are inherently wrong. Teachers and administrators are wasting more time than ever on cumbersome evaluation systems that are neither clear nor focused. It is as if the State Commissioner knew it would fail, and now it is a matter to see what sticks. What isn't sticking is the Common Core. In all of the efforts for those advocating that the Common Core isn't curriculum, they are wrong. The Common Core establishes a set of skills that must be assessed, and it is reaching ever further into the various disciplines. When a skill is assessed, it becomes part of the curriculum. As a result, the depth of units cannot be covered as they once were. Greater emphasis is being placed on word problems for younger children, where they may not yet be developmentally ready. The recall of math facts are being tossed to the side. And reading, from what I have seen, is becoming a greater source of frustration. What ever happened to reading the moral of a story, cause-and-effect relationships, and personal connections? I have to wonder where this is leading us, because the students I see at the elementary and middle school levels are becoming more and more frustrated, especially those who are English Language Learners. Remember, the Dan Malloy's education reform was initially used to address the achievement gap. So how is that happening with Connecticut's reform?

Where is America going wrong? When are legislatures going to realize the impact of socio-economics on student achievement? The achievement gap cannot and will not be solved by the current bureaucratic attempts to hold teachers or administrators responsible for the success or failure of students. Not every student is going to be working in a corporate office. Teachers prepare kids for citizenship, responsibility, and business skills. Yet, the current system of evaluations and testing assume that teachers can "fix" the underlying social-economic problems that are affecting our students and their families.

If the State is serious about addressing the achievement gap between rich and poor students, address the needs of the families and students. Stop the bureaucratic madness; allow the local communities to decide the appropriate way to reach their population and needs. Provide funding for after school activities that teach skills through community run classes that teach the creation of community newsletters, website design and coding, animation of political issues, rocketry design, or solar circuitry. My point, our forefathers were savvy enough to sell the burnt over region of Ohio to fund CT's education fund, what are the state legislatures doing to help communities create their own perpetual funds to oversee their own educational needs?

The Common Core and Teacher Evaluations fail to address the hardships families are facing and the need to keep the kids involved in positive community centered activities. Until you, our representative lawmakers, aim to address the underlining issues affecting student achievement, our communities, schools, and children will continue to suffer. Those communities with greater wealth, educational background, and community involvement through private and public organizations, will continue to succeed. We know what will happen to the Bridgeport, Hartford, Derby, Danbury, Meridan, Waterbury, Norwalk, West Haven, and Norwich school districts. Connecticut has the opportunity to make real educational progress, but it needs to think differently. Following the national movement and Federal Funding for the sake of wanting to appear progressive is nothing but reactionary. Listen to the teachers. Listen to the students. Listen to the parents. Assist communities so they may address the needs within their own

communities. Toss the Common Core to the herds. Give back the valuable time to evaluate student needs to the teachers and principals. End the madness.

--Anthony Silvey

Sources to Consider:

Focus Schools and ESEA Flexibility Requests – 2013 (prior to SBAC)

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/nclb/waiver/review_schools.pdf

Gov. Malloy's Celebration of Ed. Reform Law - & - 5 Purposes

<http://www.governor.ct.gov/malloy/cwp/view.asp?Q=503804&A=4010>

Note the exclusions to high performing schools, the minimal increase of access to early childhood education, the use of public funding for private charter schools, and canned evaluation system.

SDE – Failing to identify Social-Economic Status

http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct_report/snapshotSelect.aspx

Why would the state allow the comparison of schools, but not show data that is relevant to student success? Economics plays a role in the academic success of the school and students.

History of the Fire Lands

<https://archive.org/details/historyoffirelan00will>

Connecticut Commission on Children

http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/achievement_gap.htm

While the site, as of 3/10/2013, addresses issues of attendance, it also advances the agenda of the Connecticut Council for Education Reform, a non-profit that is heavily invested in the implementation of the Common Core. The CCER repeatedly fails to address the need for after school programs and supports outside of the classroom. Yet, the Commission on Children appears to acknowledge the importance of getting kids to school and link between the achievement gap and socio-economic groupings.